SIND PUNJAB RELATIONS

A historical survey

by

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Soorih Sindhi Adab

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It is a most depressing aspect of our national life that we have not yet produced an authentic history of the different linguistic groups that compose the population of Pakistan. We present the image of an incurious people. We have not investigated the origins of these groups nor reviewed their inter-relationships. Even those who have essayed such a study in the recent past have only distorted facts to prove their own points in a given political controversy rather than state facts objectively.

To begin with, it is no doubt a comforting thought that we, the people of the Indus Valley, are, one and all, Arabs, descended from the Arab conquerors, rulers, warriors, saints, soldiers and assorted arrivals from the holy land. But that would only establish that the racial origins of all of us are identical ; in other words, the people of the Indus Valley are all racially one. This stands to reason : the historical forces which operated in one portion of the valley did, with equal force, operate in its other, parts as well. No particular part could, therefore, perhaps claim exclusive rights to Arab paternity. If we are Arabs, we all are Arabs from one end of the Indus Valley to the other.

SOORIH SINDHI ADAB

An outside historian or ethnologist, however, may be under no compulsion to go the whole length with us in this excursion of ours into the racial past of the Indus community. He may well confront us with a series of questions : Was this valley entirely uninhabited and vacant until the arrival of the Arabs ? If not, how would we account for the total disappearance from here of the earlier people who belonging to different blood stocks had entered the valley at different times, and had built up remarkoble civilisations, traces of which are still the wonder of the world.

Proceeding, he may further ask : Are the people of the Indus Valley judged by the broad features of their racial composition, not one people ? Do the Sindhis and Punjabis, for example, belong to two different ethnic groups ? Has there been anything like a pure Sindhi race, or a pure Punjabi race, known to history ? Are not the origins or sources of their blood streams the same ? What does the total absence of aborigines in these areas indicate ? Does that not indicate that over the centuries there had been intermingling of blood on a vast scale (family planning being yet 25 centuries ahead) resulting in the rise, ultimately, of a new race spread over the entire length of the Indus Valley, from Debal, Mohanjo Daro and Amri down to Kashmir, via Harappa, Taxila, and other as yet undiscovered points on the route ? Would it be a far fetched idea suggesting that the peoples who today inhabit the valley end to end, and regardless of the ever shifting intervening political and administrative boundaries, consist, basically, of a composite race in the veins of which, by and large (exceptions within limits allowed), runs a variety of blood strains : Dravidian, Aryan (Rajputs and Iranians), Greek (Bactrian), Caucasian, Semitic (Arab), Mongol, Turk, Kushan, and what not ? Has there been any anthropological survey to locate the 'Assal Sindhis' or 'Assal Punjabis' ? Is it to be contested that, every now and then, alien hordes pouring in from many directions had been ever running this valley and settling here permanently ? What had been the effect upon the population pattern in the valley, of foreign invasions, and of recurring, surging, overwhelming gales of uprooted immigrants from North, East and West ?

Now whether it is the first theory or the second one that ultimately stands the scrutiny of modern scholarship, the basic fact of the people of the Indus Valley being racially one, and having had, broadly, the same racial origins, would seem established.

Two points, however, will have to be conceded in this connection. First, there had been frequent reshuffling of internal political boundaries to accord with the convenience of foreign conquerors or of local tribal war-lords, although the maps of the early Muslim geographers, reproduced in Elliot and Dowson, would indicate that until Middle Ages the valley had retained its territorial indivisibility and was considered as one single compact land mass. It is rather an interesting aspect of the history of this valley that it has had alternating periods of total territorial solidarity (as under the Maurya, Moghul, and British Empires and now in Pakistan) and of momentary dissolution (as after the break-up of the Moghul Empire, or under the stress of conflicts between local war-lords or warring tribes). But even through the latter phases, the overall racial pattern has remained undisturbed.

The second point to be admitted is that in remote antiquity as well as later there did occur changes in the people's religious beliefs and associations : from Paganism to Buddhism, from Buddhism to Brahmanism, and from Brahmanism to Islam. However, this phenomenon has been common to all parts of the valley.

In the medieval and modern times, four factors operated to reinforce the oneness of the inhabitants of this valley :

1. The advent of Islam which invested them with spiritual unity ;
2. Their association with the Moghul Empire ;
3. Improvement in communications during the British times, and finally,
4. The establishment of Pakistan.

CULTURAL UNIFORMITY

In the 20th century there has existed a great deal of confusion over the definition of the term "Culture". Such a confusion has even led to considerable political mischief and human suffering.

Culture, in the widest connotation of the term, encompasses a life style, and a certain state of mind, and, when reaching a higher degree of development, the true perception of human values. Loosely, of course, it can be made to mean what you would will it to mean. Cannibalism, for instance, has been a culture. Thuggery was once a culture. Hitlerism was a culture. Brahmanism with its rigid caste system went under the nomenclature of culture. The renaissance in

Europe gave birth to a distinct culture. Communism is a culture. And so were certain cultures which permitted massacres of fellow human beings. It was, I suspect, on that account that humanitarians like Elliot had tried to give culture a religious base in order to prevent the misapplication and misuse of the term.

Be that as it may, if we, in our own times, should be inclined to take an intelligent and civilised view of the phenomenon of culture and examine the culture of the Indus Valley in the light of the principles emerging from a correct definition of the term, we should come across no vital differences between the life style and mode of thinking — the two principal ingredients of culture — of the various groups of the Indus community, particularly after the advent of Islam. Except for a peripheral margin related to the natural human response to varying local weather conditions and environments, the basic uniformity of this culture is unmistakably clear. A Sindhi might be eating 'chapati' first and rice afterwards, and a Punjabi might be attacking his food in the reverse order, but both are accustomed to 'chapati' and rice. In the matter of dress both have taken to the common Kushan 'shalwar'; among women everywhere the emphasis has been on maximum covering of the body. Their other customs are also the same with only minor differences arising out of considerations of convenience. In the matter of social and ethical values too, they follow almost a common code of which the main features are: religious fervour, hospitality, tolerance, good neighbourliness, bravery, 'Ghairat' (sense of honour), Sam (the system of granting asylum), etc.

All in all, one really fails to see any deep differences between the 'cultures' of the different groups in the valley which should justify those differences being stretched to imply a multiplicity of nationalities. A focussing on differences in the soft shades or minor details of life styles distorts one's perspective and gives rise to suppositions which are being pressed into service in order to divide and dismember the nation. I emphatically maintain that the base of the Indus Valley culture is common and, therefore, it follows that culturally the entire society is one and indivisible whether a group of its constituents first eats 'chapati' or rice.

The fact of lingual distinctions and differences has never, at any point of time, throughout their history, marred the happy mutual relationship of Sindhis and Punjabis. The language problem has been but a product of the early twentieth century politics, when the British

used it to reinforce the argument of communal and racial differences with a view to justifying delay in the grant of freedom to the subcontinent. No less sinners, of course, were the Hindus (Brahmins) who, assuming, rather prematurely, that they were going to be the successors of the British, tried to impose on the whole of the subcontinent their own Hindi language in opposition to Urdu, the national language of Muslims. That was how the war of languages began.

Otherwise, there was no such thing as political division on the basis of languages. There were times when the whole of North had Arabic or Persian for its official language. In the Moghul times, almost all India had taken to Persian. In pre-Islamic times Sanskrit, Prakrit, and what not, were the vogue. During the British period the stampede was in the direction of English. No doubt every civilisation has had its language. But while there did occur conflicts between civilisations, there had been no Panipats or Plasseys over language. In other words, the divisive effect of linguistic differences came in evidence in this subcontinent only during the later British period.

But that is not to say that under the impact of any new political order, the local people's mother tongues would lose their validity, or were to be suppressed. No conqueror ever showed intolerance in the matter of his subjects' mother tongue. It was recognised that the subject people's mother tongue has its own (and a rather important) place in their sentimental and domestic life. Illustratively one could, on the subject of mother tongues now known as provincial languages, call attention to Mr. Hanif Ramay's sentimental speech on the occasion of the Waris Shah anniversary, delivered by him so lately as on 26th July and published in the Daily Jang of Rawalpindi of 27th July, in which he has directly demanded that Punjabi be recognised as the language of the Punjab ; he has, in the same speech bewailed Punjab still not being "Sahee Manon Men Azad." These observations only serve to show the vicious intensity which people feel for their local language even in the land of Iqbal, on the one side, and of the (few though) rumbustious ideologues, on the other, who are never tired of teaching the philosophy of Pakistan to the less informed populace. It is precisely on that account that no ruler in the past was senseless enough to interfere with mother tongues, though, even then, much depended on the inherent quality and inner vitality of a particular mother tongue ; if it could satisfy growing intellectual, spiritual and material requirements of its people and if its own growth

could keep pace with the overall development of the human mind, a ruler's or a ruling group's narrow-mindedness, cussedness chauvinism, or violence could never kill it. Could Indian Hindus suppress Urdu? Why did a long succession of foreign rulers, though having their own languages, compromise with the mother tongues of the various groups of the Indus community? The British gave Sindhi its alphabet. The best Punjabi poetry was written in British times. The Persian, Pushto, and Hindko, the mother tongues of the inhabitants of the NWFP, became so popular with the British that they conversed with the local people in those languages. Did the British Empire fall on that account? The British knew that the more strongly a mother tongue was challenged, the more inner vitality and power of resistance it developed. Indeed, wise conquerors and rulers always steered clear of language controversies.

In the Indus Valley, strictly speaking the people's mother tongues have varied from area to area: Every group of areas, or district has its own dialect, though that dialect may be just a ramification of the main mother tongue and may in its own right form a complete and rich lingual unit. What, however, would constitute the crowning consideration or criterion, is whether people speaking a particular mother tongue are able to communicate with the people speaking another mother tongue? The incontestable fact is that at no time throughout their history, has there been any difficulty experienced by the people speaking different mother tongues, in the Indus Valley, in communicating with each other. Furthermore, with Urdu now as the valley's national language, there remains little possibility of any such difficulty being ever encountered, only if we are sensible enough not to disguise our political designs in a feigned love of a particular language, and proceed, on that pretext, to set our people at one another's throats, undermine the nation's natural unity and imperil the country's security.

ECONOMIC SITUATION

Examined from the stand-point of the inter-dependence of their respective economies, it would seem that Sind and Punjab depend for their very existence on the waters of the Indus. They are in the same situation as the Upper Egypt and the Lower Egypt vis-a-vis Nile (extending as far as Alexandria). Sind gets water by way of the

Punjab ; the latter has its opening on the world by way of the Karachi Port. Thus their economic life has remained inextricably intertwined. Occupationally too the Indus community throughout the Valley has, by and large, followed identical lines — agriculture, cattle farming, and soldiering, trade and industry, has attracted a segment of its population in more recent times. That is about matters material.

SPIRITUAL SPHERE

In the spiritual sphere, — and in their case spirit counts for more than matter — Sind is even more closely tied to the Punjab. Not only do the two profess the same religion, they draw their daily spiritual sustenance from common sources. According to the most conservative estimate, the majority of Sind's rural population belongs to the Jamaats of, and follows, the Punjab Pirs. Three or four Punjab Gaddis encompass the spiritual life of nearly three-quarters of Sind's population. Foremost among them is the Gaddi of Hazrat Ghaus Bahawal Din Zakaria of Multan. Next there is the Gaddi of Hazrat Abdul Qadir (V) Geelani of Chenab in the Jhang district ; even Pir Pagaro is a follower of this Gaddi. Following them, in order of importance, come the Gaddis of Uch Shareef and of Sukhi Din Panah in the Multan Division. Nor has this been a one-way traffic. Hazrat Mian Meer, it must be borne in mind was Sind's spiritual emissary to the Punjab. And then Shahbaz Qalandar ! The influence of the Punjab Gaddis as well as of Sufi poets like Bulleh Shah, Sultan Bahu, Khwaja Ghulam Farid, and others is as strong today as it was centuries ago. Only you have not to measure the spiritual profundity of the Sindhis by the agonised yellings of the frustrated unemployed educated youngmen, the victims of modern political and economic pressures, and of course, of denial of what they consider should be their share of the loaves and fishes of office. They are but individuals ; the great masses of the people still remain uncontaminated. What is to happen some ten or twenty years hence, of course, will greatly depend on how sensibly and considerately the two sides deal with each other and maintain the happy tone of their mutual relationship.

POLITICAL FIELD

In the political field, I can safely vouch partly on the strength of my own personal knowledge and experience, that in the midst of

all the trials and troubles that the valley has had to go through, during the last hundred and fifty years. Sind and the Punjab stood together. It is a singular fact of their history that never did the people of these two regions, left to themselves, commit aggression against each other or cast a covetous eye on each other's territories or resources — the momentary descent of a foreign common plunderer or predator who may have sacked both, apart. We do come across instances of border disputes, often leading to military action, between Sind and Kutch, Jodhpur and Sind, and Gujerat and Sind,but never between Sind and the Punjab, or vice versa. When Sikhs overtook the Punjab, the Sindhis provided Sayed Ahmed Barelvi with soldiers and money to go and attack them from the opposite side to relieve the Sikh pressure on the heart of the Punjab. During the British times their political outlook and policies were almost identical. The Muslim masses of both the regions, broadly, kept themselves aloof from the Hindu Congress politics, emphasising all the time the distinctness of their own identity as Muslims and the Islamic character of their politics. They were equally responsive to the call of Sir Sayed Ahmed Khan and Justice Amir Ali ; they were both effectively represented in the historic Muslim deputation to Minto ; both declined toward the Muslim League as soon as it came into being ; both occasionally provided it with Presidents, both participated in the Khilafat and Hijrat movements ; and both spearheaded the struggle for Pakistan. In this respect a special quota of credit may perhaps be due to Sind inasmuch as it so Muslimized its politics notwithstanding the fact that until 1936 it had been a part of the Bombay Presidency and consequently under the political and administrative domination of an overwhelming Hindu (Marhatta, Gujerati, Kathiawadi) majority.

PUNJAB SUSTAINS SIND

On the other hand, Sind cannot but gratefully acknowledge the fact that in the course of its struggle to get out of the Hindu domination and come into its own, the Punjab Muslim leadership did everything possible to help and sustain it. Who was the first Sindhi Muslim revolutionary if not Moulana Obedullah Sindhi, a Nau-Muslim, from the Punjab (Sialkot) ? Who preached freedom from the British thraldom and brought political awakening among the Sindhi Muslim masses if not Moulana Ataullah Shah Bukhari through his

speeches, or Moulana Zafar Ali Khan through his prose and poetry, or Dr. Iqbal through his **Shikwah** and **Jawab Shikwah.** In the more practical political field, the Punjab Muslim representatives always unitedly and vigorously supported Sind's demand for separation from Bombay. They did so in all political parleys held at various levels since the Minto deputation, at all All-Parties Conferences, at the various Muslim Political Conferences within and without the Muslim League, and even at the London Round Table Conference. In 1930 when Sind launched a vigorous struggle, of the "Do or Die" type, for the separation, the Muslims of Sind had no powerful Press of their own to put forward their case. It was the Punjab Muslim Press (the "Zamindar", the "Inquilab", the "Siyasat", the "Muslim Outlook", and the "Eastern Times") which went all out to fill the desideratum, despite the fact that they did not necessarily follow identical policies or agree among themselves on provincial or All-India political problems. In fact, the support which Sind received from the Punjab Press at that juncture was so massive that it visibly tended to tilt the scales of political opinion in Sind's favour. It was against such a background of perfect trust which the two regions had had in each other that the late Sir Shah Nawaz Khan Bhutto, as Chairman of the Bombay Legislators' Committee which functioned along with the Simon Commission, had got a note appended to his report by one of the Sind Members, Syed Meeran Mohammad Shah, declaring that "Sind's ultimate destiny lies with the Punjab rather than with Bombay." That was in 1928-29. In October 1938, Sind held a Muslim League Conference at Karachi (presided over by Quaid-i-Azam himself) to protest against the interference of the Congress in the politics of the separated Sind. The biggest contingent of delegates to that conference, led by no less a person than Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, the Chief Minister of the Punjab, came from the Punjab and resolutely took the Muslim League line despite the strong pressure to the contrary by the Congress, the Unionist Hindus of the Punjab, and the British who were all supporting the Congress-sponsored Sind Ministry of the late Mr. Allahbakhsh Sumro. Incidentally, it was at that conference that for the first time the idea of partition of India and establishment of a separate Muslim homeland was formally articulated.

In 1939, communal rioting broke out in Sind over the question of the restoration of the Manzilgah mosque at Sukkur demanded by the Muslims of Sind. Unfortunately little has been brought on re-

cord concerning that movement which, in fact, served as a turning point in the history of Hindu-Muslim relations in Sind. Hindus have written so much on Jillianwalla ; but the Muslims have communicated almost nothing to their future generations about the *Manzilgah* massacre.

Again, I am a personal witness to the fact that Muslim Punjab did what no other contemporary Muslim unit of State in India had done, to bring aid and succour to the Sind Muslims in their hour of utmost distress when the British Government of India, the Congress-ridden Government of Sind, and the All-India Congress had all colluded to exploit that event for completely destroying the political personality of the Sind Muslims. Briefly stated, the Muslim masses of the Punjab spontaneously rose to a man not to let their Sindhi brethren go down the drain. The Punjab Muslim Press put up a united front on the side of Sind. The late Sir Sikander Hayat Khan, then Chief Minister of the Punjab, granted asylum to Muslim League workers from Sind who were being implicated by the Government of their province in false murder and dacoity cases concocted against them by the all-powerful Hindus. He warned the Government of India of strong repercussion on the war effort of the Punjab, should the efforts to crush the Sind Muslims continue. He refused to surrender any of the Sind Muslim political workers who were for the time being staying as guests of the Punjab Muslims and were wanted by Allahbakhsh's police. I clearly remember Sir Sikander warning the Sind Chief Minister Mr. Allabakhsh over the telephone that if any policeman from Sind ever attempted to lay his hand on any Muslim of Sind who had sought asylum in the Punjab, he will have that Police Officer arrested and locked up. When Allahbakhsh tried to remonstrate with him, Sir Sikander sternly added : "In that event not even a Minister of Sind Government will be immune from arrest should he happen to put his foot this side of Samasatta."

VOLUNTEERS SENT

Punjab enlisted volunteers from its own confines to go and court arrest in Sind ; some actually did so and suffered terms of imprisonment in Sind jails. After the local Sind Muslim leadership had been put behind the bars by the Allahbakhsh Ministry and no one

was left to continue the struggle, the entire burden of conducting it through propaganda, (posters, leaflets, stickers, and of course newspaper articles) was borne by the Punjab. Finally, it was Sir Sikander's pressure on the Government of India (those being war years when the British could not afford antagonising the Punjab) that the latter withdrew its patronage from Allahbakhsh and made it possible for a Muslim League Ministry to replace his (just a few days before the historic Muslim League Session of 1940 in Lahore began its deliberations). According to the late Sir Shah Nawaz Khan of Mamdot, the then President of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League, "this was just a humble return for the support which the Muslims of Sind had extended to their brethren in the Punjab over the Shahidgunj issue." By "Sind's support," he, I infer, meant that the late Haji Sir Abdullah Haroon had been secretly but generously contributing towards the Shahidgunj movement funds.

PAKISTAN MOVEMENT

True to such a pattern of brotherly relations, it was but natural that the Muslims of the two regions should stand shoulder to shoulder in the ensuing battle for Pakistan.

This is not an occasion to go into details. A short review of of that phase of our politics should suffice for our immediate purpose.

I have already referred to the Karachi Muslim League Conference. In addition, I might briefly point out the following facts:

1. In organising the Muslim League in Sind the most notable contribution was made by the late Makhdum Nawab Sir Mureed Hussain Qureshi of Multan (the illustrious uncle of the present Chief Minister of the Punjab), but for whose timely intervention, the growth of the League in Sind would have been materially stunted owing to the opposition put up by some leading local Pirs who were supporting the Congress via the then Allahbakhsh Ministry. Makhdum Saheb went from place to place in Sind carrying the gospel of Pakistan (strange though it may seem today) at great personal risk to his life and limb.
2. The All-India Muslim League's Foreign and Inland Publicity Committee, to which had been assigned the additional duty

of examining in depth and submitting a consolidated report on the feasibility or otherwise of the idea of Pakistan, consisted of Sir Haji Abdullah Haroon (as President) from Sind, Nawab Sir Shah Nawaz Khan of Mamdot as Chairman (from the Punjab), the present writer as General Secretary (again from Sind), Moulana Ghulam Rasul Mehr, the intellectual architect of the prospective structure of Pakistan (again from the Punjab) and a few others from Bombay, Hyderabad Deccan, and the U.P. The Committee had functioned directly under the supervision of Mamdot and was for most of the time housed in his villa. The financial burden was jointly borne by Haroon and Mamdot. It was out of the researches conducted by that committee that the Lahore Resolution was born.

3. The historic inter-provincial deputations which went from Muslim majority provinces to Muslim minority provinces and vice versa, in order to introduce the idea of Pakistan among the Muslim masses in the two sets of provinces were, no doubt, organised from Lahore but by a group of League workers from Sind, and with Sind's money.

4. For organising the historic 1940 Lahore session of the Muslim League, the same group of workers from Sind was stationed in Lahore from September 1939 to March 1940. They were the persons who had laboured from behind the scenes to work out preliminary organisational details and have them implemented under the over-all control of Sir Shah Nawaz Khan of Mamdot.

5. In preparing the whole country for the subsequent Muslim League Direct Action too, important Muslim League workers both from Sind and the Punjab worked together.

These are but just pointers intended to set the future historian on the track. What is of immediate concern is that we realise that in shaping the subcontinent's politics, no two regions collaborated so closely, and for so long, as the Punjab and Sind.

Back in the Thirties or Forties, it did not seem strange or surprising that the Muslims of Sind and the Punjab should so firmly support each other. As a matter of fact, the distinction between a Punjabi Muslim and a Sindhi Muslim simply did not exist in those days. Both were Muslims and that was considered sufficient.

NO TROUBLE OVER LAND

At the turn of the century Sind introduced a new canal system, known as Jamrao Canal Project. When it began functioning, it was discovered that though both land and water were available there were not enough local cultivators to bring the new lands under plough. The invitations to fill the vacuum were sent, not to the neighbouring Rajputana, Kutch, or Kathiawar, but to the Punjab Muslims to send their people to occupy new lands and colonise there. That having been done on a major scale, today we find Tehsils after Tehsils in the lower Sind full of Punjabi settlers.

GOVERNMENT JOBS

By about 1918-20 it became clear that the Sindhi Muslims' share in government services was being taken away by the Sindhi Hindus, because qualified Sindhi Muslims were not until then available in sufficient numbers. The representatives of the Sind Muslims considered this problem in their only political organisation, known as the Sind Muhammedan Association, of which the late Sir Shah Nawaz Khan Bhutto was the President, and it was decided that the government should be prevailed upon to fill the Muslim share of appointments in Sind with Punjabi Muslims, rather than with Sindhi Hindus. The result was that we had Punjabi Muslims — good, clean administrators — Moulvi Ziauddin, Zaman Shah, Mahmood Shah, Nur Nabi, Mohammad Husain Shah Naqvi, Mohammad Ishaq, Amiruddin, Tufail Mohammad, Mohammed Ismail Khan Kakezai, Tirmizi and many others occupying important posts in Sind then available to Muslims, and administering the affairs of Sind for nearly two most important decades in its history. So far as the Police was concerned, one could say without fear of contradiction that nearly 80 per cent of the Muslim element in it consisted of the Punjabi Muslims. No Sindhi Muslim ever protested ; on the contrary they had felt happy.

SUKKUR BARRAGE

In 1922 started the construction of the Sukkur Barrage. And who constructed it ? Below a few British top technicians and besides a few Hindu engineers from the Bombay Presidency and Sind, almost the entire personnel came from the Punjab — engineers, assistant en-

gineers, S.D.Os, overseers, contractors, mistries, masons, clerks, peons, and even labourers. Did any Sindhi Muslim grumble? No, they welcomed the arrangement.

I saw the whole Barrage and its network of canals in the process of construction. I was present at the 1922 Sukkur Durbar where the Bombay Governor laid the foundation-stone of the Lloyd Barrage. I just missed the 1932 completion and opening ceremonies, presided over by the late Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah. During this entire period I remained associated with the Sind Press, first as a columnist and later as an Editor of Muslim papers. From 1925 onwards I became, simultaneously, an office-bearer of the aforesaid Sind Muhammedan Association also. I had thus every means of knowing the working of the Sindhi Muslim mind as ennobled by the guidance of Muslim statesmen of that generation like Sir Shah Nawaz Khan Bhutto, Haji Sir Abdullah Haroon, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, Shaikh Abdul Majid Sindhi, Mr. Ghulam Mohammad Bhurgri and others. I make bold to say that there was then no such phenomenon as a "Punjabi Muslim" or a "Sindhi Muslim". All were Muslims and were so regarded and treated on both sides of the provincial borders, Bahawalpur, of course, straddling the two and softening the harshness of the boundary lines and facilitating intercourse between, if not actual (administrative) fusion of, people on both the sides. Indeed, when the 6 million acres of the Sukkur Barrage land became available for cultivation, Sind imposed no ban on Punjabis acquiring land in Sind; in fact over a million acres were sold or leased out to them. If a fraction of that area was subsequently abandoned by them, it was merely because the Sutlej Valley Project had been meanwhile completed and they had found that Bahawalpur lands commanded by it were richer in soil and preferable to those in Sind.

FAILURE OF ONE UNIT

I have heard it suggested that failure of One Unit had "conclusively proved" that Sindhis and Punjabis were in every respect, poles apart, that their mutual differences were irreconcilable, and that they could never peacefully live together under a common administration without committing outrages on each other's rights and sentiments. All this is being deduced just from the failure of that experiment. But how and why did that experiment fail? I have often observed, to my deep sorrow, that in the course of the controversy

which had raged over it, fiction defeated facts, and imagination supplied alibi for individual acts of political intrigue, stupidity, incompetence, cowardice, and intellectual dishonesty which all contributed their respective quotas to the situation that Yahya Khan, in order to gain personal popularity, exploited by liquidating One Unit and thus destroying the principle of parity between East and West Pakistan and giving Mujibur Rahman a chance to build up his majority and hasten the catastrophic process we are familiar with. The facts could be thus summed up :

1. One Unit was an administrative experiment for whose launching East Pakistan and the Punjab made sacrifices by surrendering their majorities in order to create confidence among the relatively smaller units. East Pakistan accepted parity with West Pakistan and the Punjab forewent its majority for a number of years.
2. It is untrue that any coercion was exercised on the Sindhis to join One Unit. The Sind Assembly resolved in its favour almost unanimously with only four out of a hundred and odd dissenting.
3. It is untrue that Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur was arrested because he opposed One Unit. In fact, he and his entire group had been present in the Assembly and had voted for One Unit, Ghulam Ali Khan himself functioning as the Speaker of the Assembly. Prior to coming to the Assembly he and his group had issued a series of statements supporting the One Unit project. These statements can be found in the newspaper files of the relevant period. His arrest in connection with a substantive criminal offence took place four months after the passage of the One Unit resolution in the Assembly. The Sind Government, in order to prove its bonafides had transferred Mir Saheb's case to the Punjab Government to be tried there within the jurisdiction of the Punjab High Court. Subsequently, the Sind Government withdrew this case on Mir Ghulam Ali Khan expressing his regrets and the Central Government recommending acceptance of that apology. No one, however big, influential or powerful, could be above law. It was not for the first time that a Minister was hauled up and placed for trial before a court of law. Even the so-called "strong man of Sind" Mr. Khuhro, while functioning as a Minister, had had to face dismissal and a trial in the case of

Allah Bux murder. In short Mir Ghulam Ali's arrest did not have anything to do with One Unit.

4. One Unit subsequently failed because of the intrigues of Iskander Mirza and his dupes who began by splitting up the Muslim League party and inducting into the One Unit Ministry those very persons who were opposed to the One Unit. It is these people who wrecked the One Unit from within.
5. The unrest which subsequently erupted among the youth of Sind was because the One Unit Ministers who were working for wrecking One Unit so handled its administration that the youth of Sind were compelled to ask for its liquidation.
6. One Unit had been in existence hardly for three years when there came into existence Ayub Khan's dictatorship. All the evils that flowed from it were also blamed on One Unit. Particularly two evils : general political suffocation and the arrogance of, and corruption among the swashbuckling bureaucratic buccaneers of the Ayubian era.
7. As stated above, the subsequent Yahya regime dismembered One Unit through a Martial Law Order.

A narration of these historical events does not gainsay the fact that the One Unit scheme suffered from the inherent, and almost ineradicable, defect of over-centralisation and in the social, economic and geographical conditions of the country, was unworkable. However, the discontinuance of One Unit did not mean that among the people of the valley there existed such deep-seated antagonisms that they could not live under a common administration. In my view of the matter the destiny of the people of the valley lies in living together if not under one provincial administration, but through participation in a common political effort which aims at ending iniquities, removing regional disparities and making the people of the four provinces equal partners in the national enterprise. That alone is a guarantee of the stability of the Federation and the nation's security, survival and progress.

OTHER CRITERIA

The other criteria for adjudging the basic unity or otherwise of the people of the Indus Valley should be these :

1. What are the imperatives of their economic life ?
2. Do there not exist indissoluble spiritual bonds between them ?

3. What are the demands of their political interests?
4. What do the facts of geography enjoin upon them?
5. Does their security not lie in pulling together taking into account the rapidly changing, often precarious and rarely stable, world situation?
6. Could any unit defend itself singly?

One would really like students of history to examine the fact of the basic unity of the people of the Indus Valley within the framework of these cardinal truths.

AN APPEAL

It is an unfortunate fact, but a fact nevertheless, that there have existed in Pakistan certain elements that did not assimilate the raison d'etre of its establishment. Since they had hitched their wagon to the star of Hindu dominance in the sub-continent, the coming into being of Pakistan gave them a violent wrench from which they have failed to recover. Whether this indubitable phenomenon holds true of a particular group or individual is a question which must be determined by appropriate courts of law. However, to purge its political life of those elements that operate against its integrity is a nation's sovereign right and its government's inescapable obligation. But the process should not be so stretched by the people as to envelop all schools of thought except the most conventional and consign to darkness whatever cultural expression departs from a familiar stereotype.

It would, therefore, I suppose, be an exalting act of patriotism, if we desisted from causing irritation and annoyance by attributing motives to each other, or magnifying points of difference, or causing provocation, or claiming to be the solitary saviours of the country. Federations do not work that way. Let life not become an indignity for anyone. Let us not be looking out for opportunities of slandering and insulting each other. Let tensions, renewed and accentuated from time to time, die out. Let us not destroy the priceless legacy of the happy and affectionate mutual relationship handed down to us by our fore-fathers.

In fact, we have already so much on our hands that, in order to be able to grapple with our task, we should eliminate all causes of friction and stand united, secure in the feeling that we are destined to live or die together. Unfortunately at the moment it seems to be a symptom of some deep-rooted national mental ailment that we

ruminate over and even sit in judgment, every now and then, over the patriotism or otherwise of fellow citizens, and periodically condemn individuals, lingual groups, or provinces as traitorous. Indeed if an index of traitors is arranged by a reference to newspaper files for the last 28 years, it would be found that there is hardly any citizen of consequence left who, at one time or the other, had not been so branded ; even the mover of the Lahore Resolution (Moulvi Fazlul Haq) and of the subsequent Delhi Resolution of 1946 passed by the Muslim League Party Legislators (Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy) had not been spared. This pathological condition steadily progressed, passing through various stages of development, before it assumed its final virulent epidemic form. First it afflicted individual politicians, then newspapers, then political groups, and finally communities and provinces.

A foreign witness to such an orgy of calumny and contumely must really be wondering what kind of country this is where behind every bush there has been lurking a traitor, an enemy of its integrity ready to sell it off to the very first bidder. Unfortunately it has never been realized that the greatest danger to national integrity in fact lies in creating such an atmosphere of suspicion and uncertainty. We have indulged in this unedifying and unappetizing pastime for too long. It is high time we end it now.

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